GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1849
ANSWERED ON:02.08.2001
POST HARVEST LOSSES TO FARMERS
MAHBOOB ZAHEDI

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are heavy post-harvest losses to the farmers;

(b) whether to minimize these losses, the post-harvest protection and preservation methods are badly needed; and

(c) if so, the remedial steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD Y. NAIK)

(a) & (b): While the exact quantum of post-harvest losses is not known, different studies have indicated varying degree of post-harvest losses in foodgrains. For example,

- A Committee headed by Dr. V.G. Panse in its report submitted in 1968, had estimated annual post-harvest losses in foodgrains in various stages at 9.33%.

- A survey conducted by Directorate of Marketing and Inspection, Government of India, during 1973-74 had estimated post-harvest losses in foodgrains to be about 5%.

- A joint study conducted by Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute and Indian Grain Storage Management and Research Institute during 1985-88 had estimated total post-harvest loss in wheat at about 4.12%.

In case of fruits and vegetables, according to a Sub-Working Group on Post Harvest Management, Marketing an Export for the 9th Plan, the wastage of fruits and vegetables ranges from 8- 37% at various stages of handling after harvesting, due to inadequate post-harvest infrastructure and lack of cool chain handling like pre-cooling, reefer vans, etc.

(c) In order to reduce losses to foodgrains during the post-harvest period, the Government of India launched Save Grain Campaign in 1969-70. Training, demonstration and publicity in the field of scientific storage of foodgrains at the farm level, improvement of grain storage structures and other activities are carried out by the Save Grain Campaign for the benefit of farmers.

The National Horticulture Board (NHB) which is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Agriculture, is implementing the following schemes for strengthening the post-harvest management infrastructure and minimizing post-harvest losses:-

(i) Capital investment subsidy for construction/expansion/modernization of cold storages and storages for horticulture produce;

(ii) Development of commercial horticulture through production and post harvest management of horticultural products.